

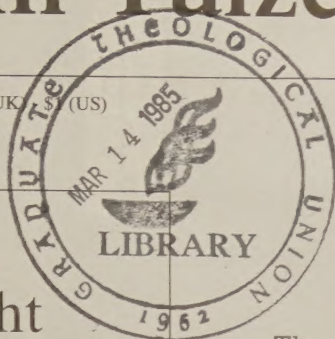
Letter from Taizé

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March-April 1985

- *Accounts of Cologne*
- *Information about the Madras Meeting*
- *News from different continents*
- *The next meetings in Taizé*

For the week leading up to Easter:

A Word of Light

When faced with death every person is poor, vulnerable before the greatness of the unknown. In becoming man, Jesus wanted to share that poverty and by his poverty he also wanted to enrich us (2 Corinthians 8.9). Nothing about him of a passive stoic. The Gospel texts do not hide his extreme anguish. His "soul is troubled" (John 12.27). "Anguish and fright gripped him" (Mark 14.33). To struggle against this state, he asks for the human company of his friends: "Stay here and keep watch with me" (Matthew 26.38).

In the dead of that night, on the lips of Jesus, we find a word of light: "Abba", "Father" (Mark 14.36). Just two syllables but they are enough to introduce a light that transforms everything, by refusing evil's pretension of leading everything. A call to what is greater, more hidden than evil, but no less strong: the love of the Father, his design of kindness which can only be love for his Son, and forgiveness for human beings. The word of surrender of a little one who knows that in the hands of his father he is in complete safety.

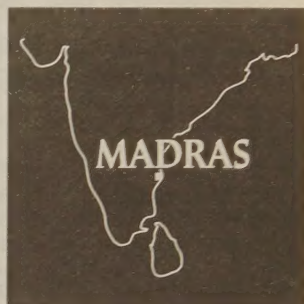
This word of trust at the heart of the prayer of Jesus sheds light on the request which follows: "Let it be as you, not I, would have it." Committing oneself to the Father's will does not mean giving consent to a fatal destiny, sadly admitting the inevitable and unchangeable nature of events. Quite the contrary, it means stating one's attachment and dependence on a will which is life, it means going forwards with the certainty that love will have the last word, however incomprehensible the path to arrive there. And Jesus does not live that certainty for himself alone. His hope includes all humanity, for which he lives that hour.

Risen from the dead, Jesus continues to pray, within us, Abba, Father. And on earth and in the "nights of humanity", he generates signs of trust and of hope, signs of his life: beings who, without losing their weakness show that history has a meaning, that there is joy which no one can take away.

An adventure of trust

The meeting which will take place in MADRAS from the end of 1985 to the beginning of 1986 will be a "pilgrimage of trust on earth" and "it will really be an adventure of trust," said Brother Roger in COLOGNE, "for that meeting is still a great unknown. Particularly in that we do not have the material means to set it up. Our community has no financial reserves. We work to earn our living from day to day and we are already at the limit of our human capacities."

"For months now," he continued, "we have maintained a permanent presence in MADRAS and we realise that the Indians will offer a big welcome, above all a contemplative one. Among the Christians of INDIA who asked us to prepare this meeting, one came to TAIZE. I asked him, "Could we just have an Asian meeting in Madras, for we are so helpless for a larger effort?" His answer was, "In Asia we need a meeting for which young people will come from all over the world, it has to be made a worldwide meeting, not an Asian one."



For the coming year, the "LETTER FROM TAIZE" will have an Indian edition, sent out all over INDIA from MADRAS. It takes up the texts which are common to all the editions, but also gives news from the country itself concerning the preparation of the meeting.

(see p.7)ç

EASTER IN TAIZE

March 31 - April 7

- Celebrating together the death and resurrection of Christ.
- Making a step towards the meeting in Madras
- Preparing the prayer gatherings which will take place at the same time as Brother Roger's visit to the Secretary General of the United Nations, (July 2nd).

THE EUROPEAN MEETING IN COLOGNE

For the first time, the European Meeting which takes place at the end of each year, took place in Germany. One of the surprises for the people of Cologne was to see so many young people from the countries of the South, (3,500 Spaniards, 4,500 Italians, nearly 1,000 Yugoslavians) facing the rigours of the northern winter to come and join them in the Rhineland. So they wanted to be particularly welcoming. Two thirds of the young people were welcomed into families a proportion which was never so high at previous European Meetings. Those who had made a long journey, the Portuguese, the Irish, the Scandinavians, were very appreciative of this. As for the 250 Polish who were able to come, Brother Roger said to them: "You are like the prow of this boat, the Church".

For the first time, the European Meeting took place in the country which in the 16th century saw the birth of the division between Christians. The Meeting was prepared in cooperation with both the Catholic and Protestant Churches of Cologne. The representatives of the Churches came together to the cathedral to celebrate an evening in prayer. Cardinal Hoeffner, the archbishop of Cologne, read a telegram with which "the Holy Father assures his closeness in heart to the thousands of young people gathered in Cologne in

the care of the Community of Taizé to deepen the trust between peoples and to be witnesses of the peace which God offers to us. May they search intensely for the light which illuminates their lives and may they find it in Jesus Christ, our common brother and Lord, in the image of the Magi who came from the Orient" (the Pope alludes to a tradition of Cologne Cathedral where the Three Wise Men are venerated). A Protestant church-leader in the Rhineland conveyed a message from the President of the Federation of Protestant Churches of Germany, Bishop Lohse: "By the power of the Holy Spirit, may your prayer for reconciliation between

all people and for peace on earth be granted." The Orthodox Metropolitan of Germany passed on greetings from the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who visited Taizé December 4th last, also sent a message.

It is impossible to give an account of a meeting like that in Cologne, in all its diversity. Each person bears an aspect in mind and is trying to bring it into their everyday lives. This is what some have recalled. Some of the things said by Brother Roger, night by night in the three large churches where the prayers took place are interspersed.

It is not possible to be in Cologne without thinking about several gatherings of young people which it has been possible to hold these last few years in East Germany: in Dresden, Leipzig, Erfurt, Magdeburg, and Schwerin.

In Dresden, the night of last June 1st, people filled the Catholic and Protestant cathedrals at the same time. A meeting had been prepared in collaboration with the two bishops and I had to go to speak to the young people, moving from one church to the other. The most difficult thing was leaving them. Inside me I was wondering, will we ever see one another again? Four years earlier I had made another visit to Dresden; but in four years time could the old man that I am take on such a journey once again?

Shortly afterwards we received the news that a Lutheran bishop from there would come to visit us in Taizé with a delegation of young people. A Catholic bishop from East Germany had managed to come to Taizé the year before with two priests. During the days that they spent with us I was amazed to find that I could hardly speak. Words were held back because I had such conviction that it was they, Christians of the Eastern countries, who would open ways forward.

Brother Roger



• In the parishes and neighbourhoods, "the participants were welcomed to stay in Bonn, Cologne and Düsseldorf. The Sunday morning, they took part in the parish celebrations and then the families invited them back for the meal. On New Year's Eve prayers took place in the parishes also.

It would not have been a Taizé meeting if it did not also have an aspect of social concern. On Saturday morning the participants visited "places of hope" in the districts where they were welcomed for example, an old people's home, a hostel for the homeless, or a hospital.

Those who were lodged in the little town of Siegburg went to the juvenile prison. It is the largest in Europe, where 850 young men are imprisoned. Some young people of the town who have had contact with the prisoners for several years had prepared a celebration in the prison chapel and the young people from other countries came to it. If some had not been dressed in grey, it would not have been possible to distinguish them from the others.

We have all come to Cologne to better understand Christ, the Risen One among us. Living from Christ means letting bloom in us an inner life which will never become worn, which cannot be worn out. In us God always creates something new.

Recently, during a meeting of our community, I was wondering with my brothers, where does this passion in us for reconciliation in the Body of Christ, his Church, come from? From where this call to widen our hearts into universal hearts?

An answer emerged: it is that we are captivated by the certainty that Christ came for all humankind. And the holiness of Christ makes it possible to have an inner vision of the Church - not to judge it from outside because of its inconsistencies but to understand that the Church is not just any reality, but that in her there is a mystery of communion.

If Christ, in the communion of his Body, were not so abandoned as rarely before, we would not be here seeking ways of reconciliation and of trust on the earth.

Sometimes with my brothers we say to one another that we would never have imagined such gatherings outside of Taizé. If it were not a question of Christ abandoned by many young people in the communion of his Body, we would not go far away from Taizé to meet young people. Nevertheless, while welcoming young people on our hill or preparing meetings outside of Taizé, we do not want to keep people for ourselves, nor to create what would become a "Taizé movement". God entrusts young people to us for a few days. We want to give what God gives to us, following the example of the Virgin Mary who gave her Son to the world and who did not hold him back for herself. This is why we point out to people the priority of the parishes as places of continuity. They will find them wherever they are, at all the stages of their lives.

Brother Roger

For some a visit from outside broke the monotonous rhythm of prison life, for others going through the gates and successive barriers was a profound experience. There were not many conversations. What can you talk about in such situations? And the prayer? The chaplain said afterwards that "something" had visibly touched the prisoners." (Frankfurter Allgemeine Newspaper)

For the childrens' prayer on the Sunday afternoon, "the crowd arriving at the doors of the twelve churches where it took place had somewhat changed in appearance. It was not just young people but families with their children, the smallest in their parents' arms, and the bigger ones held by the grand. The people of Cologne came as a family to meet the young people. In the evening, up at the front the children were seated on the ground with the brothers and some young people praying and singing in the middle of them. They were all ages, the smallest on the knees of the older, Germans, Belgians, Indians, Africans, some handicapped, all calm, expressions of wonderment, waiting...

The singing came to a stop to give way to the reading from the book of Samuel in the Old Testament. While still very young, Samuel heard a voice which called him three times and first he did not understand that it was God

who was calling him. The reading was a little long for the children who would have loved to move about. Then a prayer of intercession began. At the entrance every child received a star and then they went to place them on a blackboard. The biggest read intercessions in different languages to go with the stars. Then a procession of children

This evening in Cologne there is a German woman of 90 years of age among us. She is the grandmother of one of my brothers. During the war, her husband, a general in the German army, was among the witnesses of the resistance and was imprisoned in the Gestapo prison.

This woman had two children. With her daughter she had to go into hiding. Her son had been conscripted in the army and was killed three weeks later. After the death of her son this mother wrote a poem and here is part of it:

"When I was a child, my mother's hand held me on all the paths. Later my own child was born, my son. My hand held his, like a hand that never lets go. But death came with its icy hand. If your hands are empty now, do not clench your fists because otherwise God cannot fill them."

That mother, here with us, knows that God does not want human suffering. She does not clench her fists, she does not revolt. But she opens her hands, that is to say that she abandons herself to God with a trusting heart. If only for all of us, a trusting heart guided our every step.

Brother Roger

led the board covered with stars and prayers over to the Crib to be its sky. A few Christmas carols were sung in German by the crowd and the "Letter to children" was read in three languages.

The means are simple, the atmosphere was not as calm as during the prayers in the cathedral, but you could sense that this prayer rose from the depths of the life of the parishes and of the daily life of the families. There lies without doubt the strongest testimony: it is possible to live such moments of prayer, gathering together the generations, with our poverty, in a church which perhaps does not lend itself so easily to it, with the benches which we cannot move, the singing which is a bit out of tune and the flashes of cameras trying to capture the moment." (a young participant)

• **In the afternoon workshops**, in the city-centre, "the seriousness with which they work, listen and reflect is impressive. You can go wherever you want, to university lecture theatres, school class-rooms, parish halls or in churches and everywhere you find hundreds or thousands of young people reflecting on the "Letter from the Desert". No highs or expressions of good intentions but rather young people talking about their difficulties: this one who is in charge of a kindergarten sometimes loses her patience; those who, despite all their goodwill, do not manage to improve their relationships with their parents; or this one who puts so much energy into a job he does not like that he does not manage to be involved in his parish or with the needy. These young people are honest and critical of themselves, some do not hide their discouragement.

While the workshop on "our commitment with the forgotten of society" brought together several hundred participants (it was necessary to find extra

These last twenty years the conscience of Christians throughout the world has awakened as never before to peace, human rights, the sharing of material goods. Do the Italians know this: Italy is the first country where, through a concordat in 1984, new and courageous solutions for the material life of the Church are being elaborated. This will be a pilot experience. Young Italians, you will be good pilots!

Concerning the sharing of goods, Christians of another country have also searched: as surprising as it seems, they are Christians of the United States. The episcopacy of that country are going to open up ways. One of the five bishops who put the project of the American Episcopacy on its feet has come especially for our meeting in Cologne. The American bishops are convinced of the necessity to establish new economic rights concerning housing, health and food, and to place them on an equal footing with the other human rights.

When the human community is as if sitting on a volcano, it is vital that a response come also from the Christian conscience. But it is important that in that search, we Christians be non-violent towards the Church. Only from the inside can we call the Church to sharing of goods. We cannot stand outside of the Church to cast judgement on her manner of managing property. Criticism from outside means frightening by pressure and blocking the essential evolutions within her.

In Taizé we have always been prepared to go anywhere, to the ends of the earth if necessary, to ask, to call, to plead, but never in a public dispute, always in personal dialogue.

Brother Roger

room as all the rooms were overfilled), the workshop on "a yes for life-commitment in marriage or celibacy" drew thousands. The same interest for the workshop "your home, a little Church of God, a place of hospitality and prayer", or for Bible meetings. Could this be an escape into inwardness or piousness? There is the impression rather that the young want to balance everything out well and then decide only after a ripe reflection what they can do. A young person who looks after delinquents back home, explained to me that this inwardness is not a retreat from political and social responsibilities but rather a moment where strength is gathered for fresh involvement. (Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt Newspaper)

• **"It was by welcoming as a family,** with our three children, that we took part in the meeting. The thousands of young people who came to visit us from so far away and who are seeking to follow Christ gave us courage. We dare to look towards the future with more trust, despite the problems which everyday life present, the environment, world nutrition, disarmament, war. If young people from so many countries and confessions are ready to walk together in the steps of Christ towards the future, then that future can not be lost for humanity.

All of the families of our parish who welcomed young people went at least once to the city-centre to one of the

three churches where the common prayers took place and it was there that the spark was struck. Something was set in motion and those families will continue their commitment. You should have seen the large circle of young

What is important with God is the simplicity of our heart, the heart of a child, I would say. Many of us, nearly all of us, think that we do not know how to pray. But that does not matter, for the realities of the Kingdom cannot be measured. In a way it is perhaps better: let us be glad that through this God gives us humility. And God understands all human expression: our words, also our sighs. God understands our silences. At times silence is everything in prayer.

Yes, those who sometimes think that they are at the lowest step in a life of communion with God, go in God's eyes ahead of many others in the Kingdom. And when moments come where everything invites us to abandon Christ, let us know that God does not ask us to capitalise the faith. Each day God offers each one whatever is necessary of trust of the heart, and of faith, to advance.

What God asks of us, he gives us. Is God not asking each one of us to risk everything for Christ? God will give to each one the capacity to follow him to the end of their life on earth, always going forward from discouragement towards a trusting heart.

One day, in the Sahel, we gathered dried-up branches in the desert. We brought back one for each nation. They are a symbol. Let us dare to throw the dried wood of our discouragements into the fire which never goes out and a trusting heart will go before every step.

Brother Roger

people as they were leaving the families who had lodged them, and many other people of the parish, standing in front of the church after our parish celebration of New Year's Day. It was one big international family. Our parishes received a whiff of fresh air which brought us closer to one another and we will continue on this path." (A family in Bonn)

• **"We were welcomed** in "our" parish, a little village outside the town, with unforgettable love. It was a family with two adopted children who were the most involved in the welcome in that parish. On our arrival, the mother of the house invited us to eat. We were already eight at table when the doorbell went, with thirty-two Spaniards outside. Without a moment's hesitation, the mother of the house invited them in for the meal too. Everything was improvised and there was room for everyone. We saw to what extent a single family was able to animate a whole parish.

The last prayer together was for me the most touching moment. The enormous old icy cathedral was filled with so many people, young and old, who had come from far and near. At one stage the main door was opened. The gusts of wind which came in made the church even colder and set the lamps swinging. Nevertheless everyone stayed to pray and to sing. It was an image of the Church: sometimes she appears to some as being unwelcoming and complicated but within those poorly heated walls, new life and new departures are always possible for those who persevere. (a young participant)

1 At Gethsemane, Jesus prayed saying: Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will. Mark 14.26-42; Mk 14.43-72

2 On the cross, Jesus cried out with a loud voice: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Mk 15.1-25; Mk 15.26-47

3 Jesus said to Peter: I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back to me, strengthen your brothers. John 18.28-40; Luke 22.24-46

4 Whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord, you proclaim his death until he comes.

1 Cor 11.23-26; Jn 13.1-15

5 GOOD FRIDAY

Scripture says of Christ: They will look on the one whom they have pierced.

Jn 19.17-42

6 I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the end he will take his stand upon the earth. 1 Peter 3.18-22; Matthew 27.62-66; Job 19.25-26

7 EASTER DAY

From now on your life is hidden with Christ in God. »Colossians 3.1-4; Jn 20.1-9; Jn 8.12

8 While two disciples, who were going to Emmaus, talked and discussed with one another, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.

Lk 24.13-27

CHAPTERS 13 TO 17 OF THE GOSPEL OF SAINT JOHN

Christ knew that for him the Passover was going to be the extreme of love. The time has come for him to leave. Going through betrayal, the hatred of the world and abandonment by those who were the closest to him, he will be put to death. Gathered for a last time with his own, he wants to let them understand that his departure is a mystery at which he is living for them and for all those who will come later. He begins to wash his disciples' feet. He speaks to them of his "glorification", for once he is raised up on the cross all will be accomplished, the absolute of God's love will be revealed, and this love will spread in a completely new way: the "Paraclete", the "Protector", the "Comforter" will come not just to be with us but in us, not just for a while but for all time (14.16-20). It is not something new that the Spirit of the Risen Lord will announce, but he will make the words of Christ live in our hearts (14.23-26), to the point that we will be one with him and be his "glory, witnesses of his love" and bear much fruit (15).

Going to the extreme of love for Jesus also meant going to rejoin his Father, "to glorify" God. This is why John shows Christ entirely turned towards his Father (17). Perhaps like the disciples, we understand very little at the moment. We can be quiet to listen to the prayer of Christ at the time of his greatest struggle. His prayer lifts up somewhat the veil of sorrow which shrouds this event and it lets us see the greatest mystery there is, the communion of Christ with his Father. And we are not outside of this communion, but Christ carries us with him in all ways, for he already loved us with the very love of the Father.

Tue 9 God has rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Acts 2.42-47; Col 1.9-14; Lk 24.28-34

Wed 10 Peter said: Repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out and that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Acts 3.17-24; Col 1.15-20; Jn 1.45-51

Thu 11 Jesus said to his disciples: You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Acts 4.1-4; Col 1.21-23; Mt 5.13-16

Fri 12 God has wanted to make known to the nations the splendid riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Acts 5.27-32; Col 1.24-29; Jn 2.13-22

Sat 13 Having been buried with Christ in baptism, you have also been raised with him, because you have believed in the power of God who raised him from the dead.

Acts 10.34-43; Lk 24.1-12; Col 2.12-14

SUN 14 Jesus said to Thomas: Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

Acts 4.32-35; 1 Jn 5.1-6; Jn 20.24-31

Mon 15 In the mystery of Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Ezekiel 1.28b-2.5; Col 2.1-5; Jn 21.1-14

Tue 16 God said to Ezekiel: Son of man, listen carefully to all my words and take them to heart, and now go to your countrymen and speak to them.

Ez 3.10-11,15-17; Col 2.6-10; Jn 21.15-17

Wed 17 The Lord says: I will give an undivided heart to my people, I will put a new spirit in them.

Ez 11.17a,19-20; Col 2.16-23; Jn 21.18-25

Thu 18 Jesus said: Unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Ez 46.60-63; Col 3.8-11; Jn 2.23-3.8

Fri 19 Forgive one another, as the Lord has forgiven you.

Ez 18.27-29,30b-32; Col 3.12-15; Jn 3.13-21

Sat 20 May the word of Christ dwell in you in all its fullness.

Ez 34.11-16; Jn 3.29-36a; Col 3.16-17

SUN 21 The Risen Christ said to the apostles, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations."

Acts 3.13-15,17-19; 1 Jn 2.1-5a; Lk 24.35-48

Mon 22 Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

Ez 34.23-27,30-31; Col 4.2-6; Jn 4.1-14

Tue 23 God has called you to be joined to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

Ez 36.22-24; 1 Cor 1.1-9; Jn 4.14-24

Wed 24 May there be no divisions among you; be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Ez 36.25-28; 1 Cor 1.10-17; Jn 4.25-34

Thu 25 We proclaim Christ crucified, which to the nations is foolishness, but to those whom God has called, it is Christ, the power and the wisdom of God.

Ez 37.1-5,7-10; 1 Cor 1.18-25; Jn 4.35-42

Fri 26 God chose the weak things of the world to confound the strong; God chose what the world despises.

Ez 37.11-14; 1 Cor 1.26-31; Jn 4.46-53

Sat 27 Risen from the dead, Jesus said to Mary of Magdala, "Go and tell my brothers: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Ez 37.23b-24,26-28; Jn 20.11-18; 1 Cor 3.21-23

SUN 28 Now we are children of God. What we will be has not yet been revealed. But we know that when God appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Acts 4.8-12; 1 Jn 3.1-2; Jn 10.11-18

Mon 29 We announce what no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.

Ez 47.1a,9,12; 1 Cor 2.1-9; Jn 5.1-9a

Tue 30 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit which comes from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

Daniel 2.20-22; 1 Cor 2.10-16; Jn 5.9b-12,15-18

May

Wed 1 When they refused to renounce God, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into a fiery furnace. And they walked in the heart of the flames, praising God and blessing the Lord.

Daniel 3.23-26,46-50 ; 1 Cor 3.1-9 ; John 5.19-23

Thu 2 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you ?

Dan 3.51-52,85-89 ; 1 Cor 3.10-16 ; Jn 5.24-29a

Fri 3 Paul wrote: Judge nothing prematurely, but wait until the Lord comes.

Dan 6.27b-28 ; 1 Cor 4.1-5 ; Jn 5.30-37a

Sat 4 Daniel said: In a vision I saw one like a son of man, to whom were given authority, glory and sovereign power, and all the nations, and peoples of every tongue worshipped him. His kingdom is everlasting, it will never pass away.

Dan 7.9,13-14 ; Jn 5.41,43-44 ; 1 Cor 6.11b,19-20

SUN 5 Jesus said: Remain in me, as I remain in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you bear fruit, unless you remain in me.

Acts 9.26-31 ; 1 Jn 3.18-24 ; Jn 15.1-8

Mon 6 Paul wrote: We are fools for Christ. When we are cursed, we bless ; when we are persecuted, we endure it ; when we are slandered, we offer comfort in return.

Dan 9.17-19 ; 1 Cor 4.6b-13 ; Jn 12.44-50

Tue 7 Jesus said: Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me.

Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 1.1-4,6,8-10 ; 1 Cor 4.14-17 ; Jn 14.1-3

Wed 8 If you want to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trials. Be sincere of heart and be steadfast. Do not be alarmed by adversity, but attach yourself to the Lord and do not leave him.

Sir 2.1-6 ; 1 Cor 7.29-31 ; Jn 14.4-10

Thu 9 Paul wrote: For me, preaching the Gospel is not something to boast about, it is a responsibility which has been put into my hands.

Sir 2.7-11 ; 1 Cor 9.16-23 ; Jn 14.11-14

Fri 10 Give heed to the poor, save the oppressed, be like a father to orphans, and you will be a child of the Most High who will love you even more than your own mother.

Sir 4.1-4,8-10 ; 1 Cor 9.24-27 ; Jn 14.15-21

Sat 11 Jesus said: The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.

Sir 11.12-13,17 ; Jn 14.23-26 ; Galatians 5.13

SUN 12 Jesus said: You did not choose me, but I chose you, so that you may go out and bear fruit.

Acts 10.25-26,34-35,44-48 ; 1 Jn 4.7-10 ; Jn 15.9-17

Mon 13 Blessed is the one who is not tormented by remorse for his sins, and who is not weighed down by despair. For if a person is harsh for himself, to whom can he be good ?

Sir 14.1-2,5-6a,11-16 ; 1 Cor 10.1-4,11b-13 ; Mt 28.1-8

Tue 14 Is not the bread which we break, communion in the body of Christ ? Because there is only one bread, we, who are many, are one body.

Sir 15.11,14-18 ; 1 Cor 10.16-17 ; Mt 28.9-15

Wed 15 Jesus said: Know that I am with you always, to the very end of time.

Sir 17.1-3,7-12a ; 1 Cor 10.23-24,31-11.1 ; Mt 28.16-20

Thu 16 ASCENSION

May the eyes of your heart be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which God has called you. *Acts 1.1-11 ; Eph 1.17-23 ; Mk 16.15-16a,17-20*

THE BOOK OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Having told of the life of Jesus in his Gospel, Luke shows in the Acts of the Apostles how the resurrection of Christ is a force for communion and new life in the world. The Ascension of Christ, far from being a separation, signifies the trust that Jesus has in those whom he is sending: they will be his witnesses "to the ends of the earth" (1.8). Through their prayer together these women and men, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, stay waiting, even if hope and disappointment, faith and doubt are intermingled in their lives (1.6). After Pentecost, we see these "uneducated people of no standing" (4.13) becoming "full of courage". From then on, the meaning of their life is to be a sign of the presence of the Risen Lord among humanity. They do this in community, in a life of prayer and sharing, from which weaknesses and imperfections are not excluded (ch. 2-5).

It is thus through great tensions, exterior and interior, that the Church was built up, thanks to those who knew how to open themselves to the events of history and how to discover in them the call of God. Difficult times and trials have led them to go beyond what they considered possible for them. The martyrdom of Stephen (7) and the persecution of believers led those who had fled from Jerusalem to bring the Good News to Samaria (8.1-8) and as far as Antioch (11.19), a city which would become the departure point of the great journeys of Paul. The visit of Peter to a Roman centurion (10) was another event which led the Church to open itself to all peoples. This openness towards all is no longer, as in the Old Testament, the wait for the day when all peoples would come to gather around Jerusalem. It prompts us to come out of ourselves ceaselessly and to go towards others.

Fri 17 Jesus said: I leave you peace ; my peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world gives. *Sir 18.8-13 ; 1 Cor 11.23-26 ; Jn 14.27-29*

Sat 18 God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit which calls out, "Father !" *Sir 24.1-6 ; Jn 15.18-21 ; Gal 4.4-6*

SUN 19 No-one has ever seen God ; but if we love each other, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Acts 1.15-17,20-26 ; 1 Jn 4.11-16 ; Jn 17.11b-19

Mon 20 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Spirit ; different kinds of service, but the same Lord ; there are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all people.

Sir 30.21-23 ; 1 Cor 12.4-11 ; Jn 15.26-16.4

Tue 21 Jesus said: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth. He will not speak as from himself, but will speak only what he has heard.

Sir 34.12-17 ; 1 Cor 12.12-22 ; Jn 16.5-7,12-15

Wed 22 You are the body of Christ, each one of you is a part of it.

Sir 35.17-19a,23-24 ; 1 Cor 12.26-31 ; Jn 16.16-23a

Thu 23 If I can understand all mysteries, and know everything, if I have faith enough to move mountains, but am without love, then I am nothing. *Acts 1.12-14 ; 1 Cor 13.1-7 ; Jn 16.23b-27*

Fri 24 The Lord has sent me to bear good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken, to announce freedom to those in captivity. *Isaiah 61.1-2a ; 1 Cor 13.8-13 ; Jn 16.28-33*

Sat 25 Jesus cried out: If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me. Let the one who believes

in me come and drink !

Genesis 2.4b-7 ; Jn 7.37-39 ; Romans 8.26-27

SUN 26 PENTECOST

Jesus said to his disciples, "Peace be with you ! As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone their sins, they are forgiven."

Acts 2.1-11 ; 1 Cor 12.3b-7,12-13 ; Jn 20.19-23a

Mon 27 This is the covenant I will make with my people, says the Lord: I will place my law deep within them and write it on their hearts. They will be their God, and they will be my people.

Jeremiah 31.31-34 ; Acts 2.14-19,21 ; Jn 17.1-8

Tue 28 Jesus prayed for his disciples, saying: I am not in the world any longer, but they are in the world, I am coming to you Holy Father. Keep those whom you have given me in your name, so that like us, they may be one with you.

Is 32.15-20 ; Acts 2.29-36 ; Jn 17.9-12a

Wed 29 Jesus prayed for his disciples, saying: Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe that you sent me. *Nb 11.24-29 ; Acts 2.37-40a,41 ; Jn 17.20-23*

Thu 30 Thus says the Lord: Be not afraid, my servant, you whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground. I will pour out my Spirit upon you.

Is 44.1-4 ; Acts 3.1-10 ; Jn 17.24-26

Fri 31 Jesus said: When you are handed over, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking in you. *Ez 36.26-28 ; Acts 4.12-21 ; Mt 10.16,18*

MADRAS 1985

Initial practical information

ates: The Madras meeting will take place from December 28, 1985 to January 1, 1986. Corresponding to the arrival and departure on different flights, it may be possible to be welcomed in villages near Madras for a few days, either just before or just after the meeting itself.

is very important that the pilgrimage to Madras be in no way superficial. It will not be possible to take part without first preparing oneself during a period of several months (please write to Taizé). Material to prepare for the meeting will be given in the next issues of the "Letter from Taizé"

to register: The Europeans and North Americans who are planning to come to Madras should let us know at TAIZE before July 31. We will be able to let them know from which travel agent, in their own country, they can obtain a reduced air fare. They will need to pay the air fare before October 31. On the other hand, those from Asia, Australasia and Africa, should write directly to MADRAS in order to prepare and register for the meeting: Taizé Worldwide Pilgrimage, Post-Bag 5152, GOPALAPURAM P.O., MADRAS - 600086.

Air fares: arrangements are being made with several airlines in order to obtain return tickets to Madras from the capital cities of Europe for about 500 dollars. It would be good if those who are planning to come to Madras start straightaway to find ways of paying for their journey. Some people may be able to find a part-time job to finance themselves. Others will prepare together as a group of local church in order to make it possible for one among them to go, and if possible they will find ways of raising the air-fare which involves the whole local community. Meanwhile others will be able to contribute to a solidarity fund to help people, from Europe and from other continents, who can pay only a part of the air-fare, and whom we know at Taizé.

Contribution to costs, to cover meals, accommodation, the hiring of meeting tents, loudspeaker systems, etc.: Everyone will contribute as they are able. In particular, those from Southern Europe will contribute what they can, and a slightly higher contribution will be asked of those from Northern Europe. Reckon on a contribution of between 4.50 and 7 dollars per day. A more exact guideline price will be calculated later on. In the same way, for those from Asia and other continents, the size of contribution they make towards the costs will depend on the economic standard of living in their countries.

aster meeting at Taizé: from March 31 to April 7.
is also possible to arrive on Wed 3, Thurs 4, Fri 5
Sat 6 April. (For the meeting of the week after
aster arrive on Monday 8th April)

For young adults from 17 to 30 years old, there are weeklong meetings all year round. Each week the meetings begin on Sunday afternoon and last through to the following Sunday at midday. It is also possible to come just for a weekend (from Friday evening to Sunday midday).

work: those who wish can opt for a group which involves practical work in addition to the bible introductions and discussions. *Silence*: it is also possible to spend a week in silence, to look at your life in the light of the Gospel, with a biblical meditation each day. For many young people, *staying for a second or third week*, in silence or to work, proves to be a worthwhile experience: write in advance or speak to a brother about it on arrival.

young people aged 15-16 can take part in the following weekends: March 1-3, April 4-8 (Easter); May 16-19 (Ascension); June 6-9; the week of July 14; September 6-8, 13-15, 20-22, 27-29; November 1-3 (All-Saints).

For adults over 30, there will be meetings each week from March 24 to April 21, and each week from May 19 to November 3. Due to the shortage of space, it is necessary to write in advance and to wait for a reply.

Parents with children form a group together each week from late June until early September. Arrive on the Sunday and leave the following Sunday.

post: Everyone contributes according to what they can afford and according to the value of their country's currency. Suggested contribution per year, for young people under thirty from Britain, Scandinavia and Ireland: between 21 and 28 pence; from USA, Canada: between 28 and 34 pence. And for adults over 30: between 48 and 80 pence. N.B. There are no facilities at Taizé for exchanging money, so change money before you go.

Several preparation meetings for Madras took place in the immensely vast country of Indonesia, made up of numerous islands and different cultures. A pilgrimage of reconciliation there can be understood as a search for unity in such great pluralism, not just in society but also in the Church. A young African who took part in these meetings wrote:

“The light of each day welcomes us like the open arms of the Asians to embrace Europe and Africa, come to share the joy of the love of God for his creatures. Yes, if Africa is known as a continent of hospitality, is not Asia just as much the same? At every leg of our journey, here in Jakarta as much as in Bangkok, the reception is the same everywhere.

The Christians of Indonesia are a minority. They have different problems to those found in Europe or Africa. The remarkable thing with them is seeing to what an extent they are signs of love for those of their family or of their neighbourhood who are of a different faith to them. The end of Ramadan showed us this, when we saw young Catholics stopping their own activities to help their Muslim friends to prepare the feast.

I cannot say enough what I feel on this pilgrimage when, going from one country to another, I represent three continents: some people think that I come from America and others take me for an Asian of New-Guinea until I explain that I am African."

Meetings of preparation for Madras have also taken place in other Asian countries:

"Speaking about a pilgrimage of trust on earth in the tense atmosphere of the Philippines does not mean airing a fine idea, but touching on very concrete realities. There is general dissatisfaction, strikes, protests, price rises and a deteriorated economic situation.

One day we went to the prison and met the prisoners. Fifteen months before, we had left the icon of the cross with them and since then it is carried every Sunday from one cell to another. This pilgrimage of the cross will continue among them."

Easter and coming meetings at Taizé

fore you come. (You can also pay your contribution in Travellers' Cheques in French Francs)

Accommodation: In tents or dormitories (boys and girls separate). Bring sleeping bag, blankets, and a lightweight or inflatable mattress. Also a tent, if possible.

It is useful to bring a Bible.

Coach travel to Taizé from London: contact: Harris Coaches Ltd, Manor Road, West Thurrock, GRAYS, Essex RM16 1EH. Tel:(0708) 864911

To take part in the meetings, send this form to: Meetings, Taizé Community, 71250 CLUNY, FRANCE.

NAME : _____

FIRST NAME :

ADDRESS :

(with post code and country)

Telephone :

Occupation : Age :

Will participate in the meeting from to

Will bring my own tent : yes / no.

I have already been to Taizé : no / yes (date of last visit :)

Please send additional registration forms.

GUATEMALA

"Seven of us started out by meeting in the house to pray and to sing together, and to read the Letter from Taizé. Then we started to work in one of the poorest districts of the capital, sharing with the people, seeking to help them, above all widows and old people, also preparing children for first communion. We realised that it was necessary to have a place in that neighbourhood where we could meet. We built a shelter. Now it is there that we pray and that we have a weekly exchange with the people. On Saturdays we have a prayer vigil. A priest brings the Blessed Sacrament and we pray for reconciliation in our country and throughout the world.

All of this goes on in the capital, but I work in another town at present. There we have formed a little group of young people. We meet on Wednesday evenings. Saturday evenings we have a long prayer vigil to which we invite other people. I was asked by the diocese to participate in the pastoral care of young people. We visit all the groups of the town and we invite them for a day of prayer for reconciliation. In communion with the Cologne meeting, twenty young people of Guatemala and ten from El Salvador came together in a sanctuary in this country, from December 27 to January 1. This is how we started International Youth Year."

BRITAIN

In London:

Wed. 6th March, 7.30 pm, Evening prayer in Victoria: Jane Reed, 267-6481 or 729-4260
Sat. 16th March, 12.30 - 5.30 pm, Croydon meeting: Fred McAndrew, 686-7326
Sat. 30th March, Vigil of prayer in Stepney: Rosemary Vaughan, 791-1205 or Alan Marley, 729-2225

"SONGS OF PRAISE" from TAIZÉ
on BBC 1 at 6.40 pm
Easter Sunday, April 7

"Here in Nottinghamshire we are right in the thick of the trouble, since the local miners decided not to join in the strike unless there was a national ballot - which there still has not been. This has had the effect of tearing apart whole communities, villages and families, and setting miner against miner. Already there has been much violence and damage done, both physical violence and intimidation, and also the emotional violence created by bitterness and blind hatred. If ever there were prayers needed for reconciliation, these small mining communities that depend totally on the pit for employment need them. It will take more than a generation to heal some of the wounds, and the scars will be visible for much longer. Please pray for the quick ending of the dispute at management, union and government level; for the families whose homes have been damaged, and wives and children who have been threatened with violence; for the families where father and son are divided because one went on strike and the other stayed at work; for those on strike, that they will not be humiliated or considered worthless by the management, government or the majority of

people in this country after the dispute; for the Church, for the work of reconciliation that she must do so that people may see that forgiveness is at the heart of the Gospel, and may know the power of Christ to heal."

CONGO AND ZAIRE

"Some young people from Zaire came to join us for a weekend in Brazzaville. It is not far, all you have to do is to cross the river. We meet on a hill which looks down on the Congo River rapids. From the other side we see Zaire. When night fell we were fifty belonging to catholic and protestant parishes. We looked for all the words which evoke the idea of reconciliation. It revealed itself to be a vast area. In discussion groups the reflection went on past midnight in enthusiastic exchanges: what are the conflicts and tensions which prevent us from being in communion with others? How can we prepare to live reconciliation and forgiveness in our daily life? A prayer around a text from John's Gospel brought the day to an end at a late hour.

In the morning after a brief introduction we entered into more personal questions: what are our priorities in the choice of our studies, of commitment, career, vocation? Taking advantage of the cool hours of the day we took the two questions for the preparation of the Madras meeting with the emphasis that they put on trust among people. The presence of Zaireans is a blessing: misunderstandings and prejudices are often as strong as the people are close. Their testimony of their life in Kinshasa closed the morning.

How can we go further than just sharing words? How can we give what God gives us? A gesture, a first commitment, even a limited one is necessary. Everyone wrote a commitment on a piece of paper to offer it to God during the Eucharist. Before everyone went back to their own parishes we exchanged addresses and both Zaireans and Congolese parted company with the promise to see one another again soon."

IRELAND

A meeting with Brother Roger, entitled "Sowing seeds of trust" will take place in Dublin, May 3-5, at the joint invitation of the Catholic Pro-Cathedral and the Church of Ireland Christ Church Cathedral. There will be prayer celebrations and meetings for reflection with the people of Dublin and those who come from around the country, not just young people but all ages.

This meeting can become a station in the "pilgrimage of trust on earth" which is taking place in many countries of the world. The pilgrimage is first of all a reality of everyday life: trying each day in concrete situations to be a leaven of peace and trust; going towards those whose commitments and options are very different, to understand them, and to create links of communion.

The preparation for the meeting in Dublin started several months ago. It is a time to undertake little pilgrimages towards one an-

other, making visits, to pray together, reflecting together in parishes, groups and communities. Some questions are at the heart of this preparation: what are the signs of hope in our parish that we could share with others during the weekend in May? What is the place of contemplative prayer in our parish? In what way is our local Church a place of reconciliation, not just for Christians but also for the visions in society?

Contact address: "Dublin Meeting", Dartmouth Square, DUBLIN 6. Tel: 60620

FRANCE

In Lyon a meeting like the one in Dublin is being prepared for March 2-3.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

APRIL 14-MAY 28: A brother of the Community and some young people will be making a series of visits to different parts of Australia and New Zealand, as part of the pilgrimage of trust on earth and the preparation for Madras. For information on dates and places, and to invite them to meet your parish, group, movement, contact:
Brian & Helen Phillips, 2 Bryan Avenue, KENNY, S.A. 5009
Tel: (08) 45.20.28
and Ian & Christine Deverell, 7A Bosworth Terrace, Mt. Victoria, Wellington. Tel: 848.394

UNITED STATES

The pilgrimage of reconciliation animated by brothers of Taizé will continue:
JAN: Raleigh NC. / FEB: Portland, ME ; AC MA ; Miami, FL ; Sacramento, CA ; San Francisco ; Los Angeles ; Valparaiso, IN. / M Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, NE ; W Park, FL ; Holland, MI. / MAY: Buffalo, (East Coast Youth Conference) / J Jamaica, NY ; Notre-Dame, IN, (Midwest Youth Conference) ; Cincinnati, OH, (Convention of Pastoral Musicians).
For information, call Taizé at Tel: (212) 246 00 29 413 W 48th, New York, NY 10036

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